Fairbanks offers Spanish

4/18/84 By Mrs. Sue Clokey Schools (V.C) Community Affairs File
MACKSVILLE GAZETTE

In the late fall of 1984 the Vigo County Board of School Trustees agreed to begin an experimental program whereby, a teacher aide fluent in Spanish, would assist the classroom teacher in implementing the teaching of beginning Spanish as a foreign language in the elementary school. The class chosen to pilot this program was the Academically Talented fifth and sixth grade class at Fairbanks School. Mrs. Sue Clokey is the teacher.

The task of implementing such a program was by no means an easy one. This was the first time a foreign language had been introduced into the elementary curriculum in the Vigo County Schools. There was no written curriculum for Spanish and there were virtually no materials available.

Students from I.S.U. applied for the job of student aide and all went through the screening process. Finally, one student was chosen. Miss Cindy Young. Miss Young is a junior majoring in secondary education and has a minor ir Spanish. She has had the unique experience of having been a student at the American School in Mexico City for twelve years. Cindy has incorporated into the Spanish curriculum at Fairbanks her expertise not only of the language itself but of the cultural and anthropological aspects of Mexico.

The Spanish curriculum at Fairbanks revolves around unit study. These units, thus far, have incuded awareness, self, home, family, foods, clothing, verb usage, and pen pals. Within each unit, the students have learned vocabulary, cultural awareness, and how to speak conversational Spanish.

The students have just completed writing to pen pals at the American School in Pachuca, Mexico. They each videotaped a message to their pen pals along with special features of their school and community. It is hoped that these students relationships will be nourished over years to come and that perhaps a student exchange system might even be worked out.

At the present time, the Fairbanks students are writing, producing and acting in skits depicting four major areas of Mexican history. These areas include the Aztecs and conquistadores, the reign of Maximillian and Carlota, the Mexican Revolution, and modern day Mexico. Each skit will incorporate the unites of study previously learned and will center around the home in the different periods of history.

The presentations will be sometime in May and will be open to anyone interested.

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